



The Journal

Vol. 27

No. 25

www.cnic.navy.mil/bethesda/

June 25, 2015

Men's Health Month: Don't Take Chances with Your Health

By Sharon
Renee Taylor
WRNMMC Public
Affairs Staff Writer

Men's Health Awareness Month, celebrated every June, is designed to heighten the awareness of preventable health problems as well as encourage early detection and treatment of disease among males. Five Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC) patients shared their stories to encourage men to seek regular medical advice and early treatment for disease or injury.

"You need to make sure you stay up on your health care," retired Marine Gunnery Sgt. Darrell Aikens encouraged men. He said some men know they have symptoms and medical issues, but put off seeking care because they are afraid to find out the cause.

"These are the same people [who] were on the front lines, some of them in Afghanistan, Iraq, Vietnam, or any of those places," Aikens said. If they have the courage to fight and face someone with a gun, they should have enough courage to face a doctor who may save their life, Aikens explained. His last minute decision to keep a medical appointment proved to be one of the most important of his life.

Retired Marine Gunnery Sgt. Darrell Aikens, 51 - Leukemia

After more than a year of work in Afghanistan as a contractor, Aikens returned home to the states. After his stateside reunion with loved ones March 1, 2012, the retired Marine almost nixed the examination with his primary care

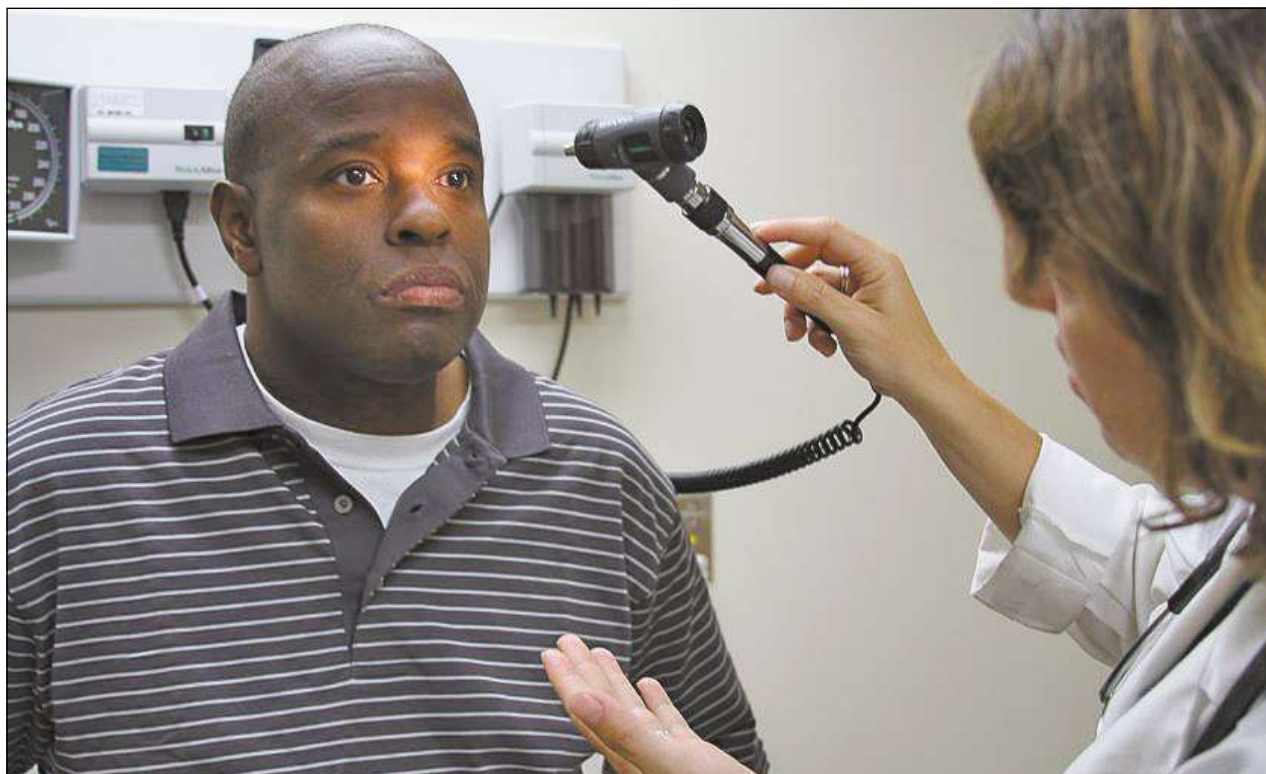


Photo by Sharon Renee Taylor

Retired Marine Gunnery Sgt. Darrell Aikens' last minute decision to keep a 2012 medical appointment proved to be one of the most important of his life. He was diagnosed with leukemia, which remains in remission today. "After this experience, I'm going to make sure when I schedule an appointment that it becomes a priority," he said.

provider a week later—he felt fine.

Aikens weighed nearly 50 pounds less than when he began his overseas assignment 14 months earlier. He waited patiently at the Woodbridge Health Clinic for the results of a routine blood test. While a "normal" absolute neutrophil count (ANC) of the white blood cells that fight against infection numbered 5,000 or more, Aikens count revealed an alarming low of 230. The nurse delivered his results. "I could see it in her eyes," Aikens recalled.

He received a cryotransfusion, a transfusion of white blood cells, and admission to WRNMMC. There he underwent a bone marrow biopsy that revealed Acute Pylomyelocytic Leukemia. Aikens couldn't believe it.

"I really didn't understand the scope of what I was hearing until I came to the cancer ward, 5-West, and they informed me that I may have leukemia; then I was shocked," Aikens said. "I figured they had made a mistake or something."

He began chemotherapy and a series of other medications and treatments. For the last two years, Aikens has remained in remission, and thinks differently about medical examinations.

"I used to believe and say, 'My annual physical is coming up...if I make it, I make it, if I don't, I don't,' because it was just basically a formality," he said. "After this experience, I'm going to make sure when I schedule an appointment that it becomes a priority."

"We make sacrifices for

our country, our family, our God, everybody, and least of all, sometimes we know we're feeling bad you know, go to the doctor," Aikens urged. "We try to put off or make excuses, 'well we can do that later,' but you can never tell when later is going to be. It's very important. A lot of us look at going to the doctor and 'complaining' about something; we say we are weak [if we actually do], especially when we're on active duty. People joke with you when you tell them you're going to medical, but you need to take care of your health. You take care of your body, and your body will take care of you."

Retired Air Force Col. Rick Atchison, 75 - Prostate Cancer

Retired Air Force Col. Rick Atchison was 71

when he was diagnosed with prostate cancer. He monitored his PSA [Prostate-Specific Antigen] level since 2004. With an elevated PSA in June 2011, he returned to WRNMMC later that August, but elected to forego a biopsy until October, when he was rushed from a camping trip to a Fort Belvoir, Va., clinic at 3 a.m., in pain. Biopsies revealed a very aggressive form of prostate cancer had moved outside the prostate.

"Looking back, I didn't act fast enough," he said. "I would've saved myself a lot of grief."

He recommends men get screened and follow their PSAs. "Avoid letting it go," Atchison said.

Active Duty Marine Colonel, 49 - Heart Disease

It started with chest

pain in May 2014. At 48 years old, the Marine colonel, who wishes to remain anonymous, said the angina eventually led to the discovery of an 80 percent blockage in one of the arteries of his heart.

He said he mentioned the chest pain to his physician at a follow-up exam during his post-deployment assessment for a different issue.

"I didn't think anything of it because it just seemed so unusual for someone my age, in really good health—it seemed like it might've been related to asthma or some kind of indigestion," he said. The Marine did not smoke, wasn't a big drinker or obese, and he enjoyed exercising. "There was nothing in my case that would point to heart disease."

He obtained an EKG [electrocardiogram] from his primary care physician, which came back normal. "One of my take-aways from this is, a normal EKG may not tell you the full story of what's going on," he said. The chest pain kept recurring and it was coming with less and less exertion.

He returned to his primary care physician and received another EKG; this time it was abnormal. His primary care manager immediately scheduled him for a stress test, which showed he was having a blood flow issue.

The Marine explained he had a cardiology procedure which involved a fiber-optic cable shooting dye through his heart to detect a blockage. Cardiologists placed a stent to relieve the 80 percent blockage in his left anterior descending (LAD) artery.

See MEN page 10

USUHS CMC's Column

The Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences is a Department of Defense health sciences institution at the forefront of cutting edge health professional academics and research. There are many exciting events at the Uniformed Services University campus over the summer. Along with the birds, bees, blooming flowers and colorful trees, USU will be bustling with hundreds of new health professional scholars, researchers, faculty members and support staffs.

This spring, 51 new Doctor of Nursing Practice degree students began classes at the University. Over the next couple of months, more than 200 medical and graduate students, along with a number of support staff, faculty, and researchers will enter through the doors of the university to begin their new and exciting careers. For a number of our health professional scholars, particularly the medical students, this summer marks the beginning of many military careers. More than 60% of the medical students who will be entering through doors of USU had no prior military experience. The USU team welcomes every scholar, researcher and staff into the university, paying particular fo-



Command Master Chief Patrick Hyde
USUHS Brigade Senior Enlisted Leader

“Over the next couple of months, more than 200 medical and graduate students, along with a number of support staff, faculty, and researchers will enter through the doors of the university to begin their new and exciting careers.”

cus on diversity, unity, teamwork and shared leadership as natural and fundamental characteristics of the institution.

Another exciting upcoming event pertains to the Enlisted to Medical Degree Preparatory Program (EMDP2). The EMDP2 program was first launched in 2014 to prepare highly motivated enlisted members to successfully apply to medical school for careers as military physicians, and last July, five U.S. Air Force and five U.S. Army enlisted personnel began their two-year study at the George Mason University, Prince William campus. This coming July, another ten enlisted personnel from the U.S. Army and U.S. Air Force will begin their two-year journey in the EMDP2 program. The U.S. Marine Corps recently released a message announcing the opening of the application process for qualified U.S. Marine Corps enlisted to the program, and there may be several who join the program this year.

In an effort to make this summer a monumental and successful time for all, I challenge everyone to make a positive contribution to teamwork and performance, shared leadership, diversity and respect for human dignity.

Bethesda Notebook

NCOER Training
Non-Commissioned Officer Evaluation Report Training will be held in the USO July 1 (2 to 4 p.m.), July 7 (8 to 10 a.m., and 2 to 4 p.m.), July 8 (8 to 10 a.m.), July 21 (8 to 10 a.m., and 2 to 4 p.m.), and July 22 (8 to 10 a.m. and 2 to 4 p.m.). The training is required for all Soldiers E-4 and above and other service members if you are in an NCO's rating chain. For more information, contact Scott Burgamy at 301-319-7994.

Navy Bystander Intervention
Navy Bystander Intervention to the fleet training is held every Friday through Aug. 21. The training is mandatory for Sailors to provide them with instruction to help recognize potential negative situations and how to safely intervene. For times, locations and more information, call HM1 William F. Davis at 301-319-4609, or email William.f.davis3.mil@mail.mil.

NCR-MD Town Hall
Rear Adm. Raquel C. Bono, director of the National Capital Region Medical Directorate will host the NCR-MD quarterly town hall on July 21 at 7 a.m. in the Memorial Auditorium. All Walter Reed National Military Medical Center staff members are encouraged to attend.

Published by offset every Thursday by Comprint Military Publications, 9030 Comprint Court, Gaithersburg, Md. 20877, a private firm in no way connected with the U.S. Navy, under exclusive written contract with Naval Support Activity Bethesda, Md. This commercial enterprise newspaper is an authorized publication for members of the military services. Contents of The Journal are not necessarily the official views of, nor endorsed by, the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense, or the Department of the Navy. The appearance of advertising in this publication, including inserts or supplements, does not constitute endorsement by the Department of Defense or Comprint, Inc., of the products or services advertised. Everything advertised in this publication shall be made available for purchase, use or patronage without regard to race, color,



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Pediatric Critical Care Course Enhances Preparedness

By Sarah E. Marshall
WRNMMC Public Affairs
staff writer

A new course at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC) is helping maintain readiness by providing staff the skills they need to continue offering quality care for critically ill and injured pediatric patients.

The Pediatric Fundamental Critical Care Support (PFCCS) course, held June 13-14 in the Simulation Center, is designed to better prepare providers and physicians-in-training, who do not routinely care for critically ill and injured pediatric patients, to treat such patients, said Lt. Cmdr. Chris Watson, a course instructor. He added that the course helps enhance their skills should they be asked to provide this type of care, either while they're deployed during combat or on a humanitarian mission. They may also be required to provide such care while waiting for a specialist to arrive or while waiting for such a patient to be transported to a specialty area, he said.

"It's a multi-professional course, and it covers the whole gamut," Watson said. He explained the course targets a wide audience, including paramedics, Intensive Care Unit (ICU) doctors, respiratory therapists, corpsmen and medics, house staff, as well as residents, and it covers the basic, but important, principles in the initial care of critically ill and injured pediatric patients.

"It's designed to take care of kids in the first 24 hours," said Watson, who is also medical director of the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU). Participants learned sedation, how to treat acute infections, and how to identify/respond to changes in medically unstable pediatric patients who may have suffered trauma, or burn injuries. The course integrated lectures and hands-on skill stations, where they responded to scenarios using the Simulation Center's high-fidelity, life-like pediatric "patients."

Scenarios involved evaluating "patients," such as a pediatric oncology patient who developed a severe infection. They were to evaluate and treat the "child," and in other scenarios, were required to transport a patient. This tested their communication skills, as they had to give a verbal hand-off to another team, Watson explained.



Courtesy photo

Pediatric residents, Dimas Espinola, center, and Claire Daniels, right, receive hands-on training during the Pediatric Fundamentals of Critical Care Support course at Walter Reed Bethesda, June 13-14.

"Communication is one of the key principals," he said. Practicing these skills can also be applied to multiple different settings and scenarios, as well as continue to enhance their day-to-day skill set, he added.

Watson said the course is challenging, as participants had to begin by studying large textbooks and materials before starting the course, and then take a pre-test on the first day. They completed 15 hours of lectures, skill stations and presentations, and were required to pass a post-test, he added. After completing the course, participants earned 15-17 hours of continuing medical education credits and a PFCCS certificate of completion.

Implementing the course at WRNMMC for the first time was a success, Watson noted, and he hopes to offer it again in the fall. More than 30 staff members attended this iteration, including pediatric residents, pediatric intensivists and pulmonologists, respiratory therapists, as well as nurses from the PICU, Surgical Intensive Care Unit (SICU), Medical Intensive Care Unit (MICU), and the Emergency Department. Additionally, nurses from the Canadian Forces attended the course, Watson said.

Among the participants, Maj. Stephanie Smith with the Canadian Forces said she found the collaboratively training with fellow military members "extremely beneficial."

"All of the instructors and many of the students had a unique understanding of the intricate realities of providing

care in operational theater of war and in disasters," she said. "The instructors demonstrated exceptional instructional techniques, and seamlessly taught complex conditions ... throughout the course."

Smith is an Emergency Department nurse in the Officer Commanding Treatment Company at 1 Canadian Field Hospital, in a position similar to that of a nurse manager. She's responsible for maintaining her personnel's clinical competency, for which she said she frequently provides training through clinical simulation.

"This [training] is essential as a military medical professional, as we are frequently are employed in austere environments with limited personnel and resources," Smith said. "This course adds the extra piece required to safely treat critically injured pediatric patients."

She treated many such patients, she said, while deployed to Afghanistan in 2007 and 2009, as well as with the Disaster Response Team in the Republic of the Philippines in 2013. She encourages others to take the course, which takes you out of your comfort zone with challenging and complex scenarios.

"Read the book and bring your expertise and knowledge to the course, which adds to the experience of others," she said. "The course offers a variety of skills stations and opportunities to lead practical scenarios, developing confidence in all participants."

A registered nurse in the

Adult ICU at WRNMMC, Air Force Capt. Lisa McFarlan also took the course. She deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and said she had to quickly learn how to care for this unique population in a combat zone. Until her deployment, she had limited experience with critically ill/injured pediatric patients in her 20 years of nursing. She is soon changing duty stations, to work in the PICU at San Antonio Military Medical Center, and the course has given her confidence in performing initial assessments in such patients, as well as recognizing the appropriate interventions, either in a combat zone, until a pediatric specialist could be attained, or the patient could be transferred to a higher level of care, she said.

McFarlan, who is also a resource nurse/Code Blue Team member, said she most enjoyed the hands-on experience in the Simulation Center, where she could put her newly-obtained knowledge to use, and see how the Pediatric Critical Care team works together to provide "excellent and comprehensive medical care to these unique individuals."

She hopes to continue her pediatric education, as well as train to become a Critical Care Air Transport Team and Aerovac nurse. While doing so, she will be able to share what she gained from the PFCCS training and stress to others in the future, "the importance of pursuing this training, not only to help them in their stateside assignment but to prepare them

for when they do deploy," she said.

Smith encourages others to sign up for the course, especially as service members who will likely deploy or PCS at some point in their career to somewhere they may be required to care for such pediatric patients, she said.

Navy Lt. Helene Pinches, pediatric intern, also participated in the course, and would "highly recommend" it to others as an important step in becoming competent in caring for critically ill children. The great takeaway for her, she said, was learning to recognize a critically ill child, and how to begin integrating the physiologic concepts into seamless patient care.

"In that vein, the parts of the course that I most enjoyed were the breakout sessions where we were able to gain hands-on experience running patient care for simulated cases," Pinches said. "The resources available to us in the Simulation Center are fantastic in that the 'patients' can respond in real time to your interventions, and the ability to get directed feedback from course instructors and peers regarding your performance was invaluable."

Pinches added her goal in her career is to provide "thorough, excellent care to every patient I encounter, whatever the setting."

Air Force Col. Dan Bruzzini, of Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio, was among those who helped develop the PFCCS course in 2008, and also taught the course this month at WRNMMC. He noted the course is now offered throughout the U.S., as well as in 20 countries worldwide, and "is the way to transform how we care best for children in extremis."

"This will not just save the lives of critically ill/injured children, but also improve the interoperability between U.S.-Canadian medical systems. This has never been done before and is quite a great achievement for WRNMMC," Bruzzini said. "The impact of the WRNMMC Pediatric Fundamentals of Critical Care Support course is tremendous, and worldwide, because it will prepare its students for the greatest gift God gives a family – their child."

For more information, or to sign up for the PFCCS course, contact Lt. Cmdr. Chris Watson, at christopher.m.watson32.mil@mail.mil.

NICoE Student Art Show




Photos by Linsey Pizzulo

Six undergraduate students interested in pursuing creative arts therapy graduate studies met with Melissa Walker, National Intrepid Center of Excellence (NICoE) art therapist, at the first NICoE Art Therapy Student Workshop, June 19. Participants discussed education, career paths and participated in a mask-making activity. The NICoE hosts two student workshops per year as a commitment to supporting future art therapists who are interested in working with the military population.




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Taking a Time Out for Safety

**By Lt. Cmdr. Christine Burns
Perioperative Nurse Educator**

Typically, when one hears the phrase “time out,” it infers a break or pause while in the midst of an activity. In the operating room (OR), a time out occurs before surgery can commence. The operating room staff at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC) reaffirmed their commitment to exceptional safe patient care by pledging to do a time out for every patient, every time.

National Time Out Day was June 10, and celebrated June 11 at WRNMMC so as not to impede safe patient care. The OR is a busy place

and the time out occurs immediately prior to an incision being made, similar to a pilot going through their checklist before each take off. The OR staff does a time out for each patient before each procedure, every time. All activity ceases so that all team members sole focus is on communicating about the patient they are about to operate on. During a time out the following is discussed by the surgical team:


- Patient name
- Patient date of birth
- Reading out loud the surgical consent form signed by the patient
- Kind of surgery to be performed
- Location and side of the patient where the surgery will be performed

See **TIMEOUT** page 10

TIME OUT

For every patient, every time.

June 10, 2015



Courtesy Graphic

NMPDC's NPDS Honors Graduates

By Cynthia Hilsinger
NMPDC Public
Affairs

Twenty dental residents and two dental interns from the Naval Postgraduate Dental School (NPDS), a directorate of the Navy Medicine Professional Development Center (NMPDC), received their diplomas during a graduation ceremony in the Memorial Auditorium in Walter Reed National Military Medical Center June 12.

The President of Uniformed Services University of Health Sciences Dr. Charles Rice presented master's degrees to the 20 residents. The Chief of Naval Operations, Director for Medical Resources, Plans, and Policy Division and Chief of the Navy Dental Corps Rear Adm. Stephen Pachuta gave the commencement speech, recalling his own graduation day, the journey and milestones of professionalism.

"Pay attention, it may be you up here in 20 years," said Pachuta.

The Dean of NPDS Capt. Glenn Munro announced the awards for Civism, Faculty, and Residents Awards. Mr. Miguel Cruz received the Civism award. The Faculty Award for teaching excellence went to Lt. Cmdr. Susan Hinman.

The Research Awards are for residents who have significantly advanced the science of dentistry and they went to Lt. Cmdr. Teresita Alston (1st place), Lt. James Hawkins (2nd place) and Lt. James Linkous (3rd place).

The Dean's Award for Academic Excellence went to Lt Marina Hernandez. The Chief of Navy Dental Corps Award for the resident who excelled as a military officer and health care professional went to Lt. Michael Andersen.

Family and friends looked on with pride as residents received their



Photo by HMI Johnathan Garnes

The Class of 2015 Dental Residents and Interns from the Naval Postgraduate Dental School (NPDS) stand to accept recognition from the Dean of Naval Postgraduate Dental School and the President of Uniformed Services University of Health Sciences for the academic completion of their studies June 12.

degrees, and interns their certificates. The Class of 2015 turned and was presented as graduates.

NPDS, under the NMPDC command umbrella, is the only DOD-centralized site for postgradu-

ate dental education, and conducts dental specialty training in its clinics located on Naval Support Activity Bethesda. All specialty training programs at NPDS are fully accredited by the Commission on

Dental Accreditation, and graduate between 20-25 dental officers per year with specialty board eligible training in endodontics, periodontics, prosthodontics, orofacial pain, oral and maxillofacial

pathology, dental public health, and comprehensive dentistry.

For more information about NMPDC, visit: <http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmpdc/Pages/index.aspx>.

1 Baby Girl

2 Accidents

3 Deployments

2 Generations of Service

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8 Years Active Duty

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Hospital Corpsmen Celebrate 117th Birthday



Photo by Bernard S. Little

Hospital Corpsmen recite the Hospital Corpsman's Pledge, vowing to "hold the care of the sick and injured to be a privilege and a sacred trust and [assisting] the medical officer with loyalty and honesty," for a celebration of the 117th Birthday of the Navy Hospital Corpsman after morning colors June 18 at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC).

By Bernard S. Little
WRNMMC Public
Affairs staff writer

Service members from all branches, as well as civilians, contractors and volunteers at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC) gathered in front of the historic Tower on Naval Support Activity Bethesda to celebrate the 117th Birthday of the Navy Hospital Corps after morning colors June 18.

WRNMMC Command Master Chief Tyrone Willis, began the ceremony welcoming his fellow hospital corpsmen, past and present, to the event. He added the affair was about celebrating one of the most distinguished groups in the U.S. military.

"From the annals of history, corpsmen have done incredible things at incredible times," Willis said. He encouraged today's corpsmen to follow suit and "leave something behind that is incredible so people will know you were here. Leave that footprint in the sand wherever it may

be, [and] know that your footstep has a legacy left behind which people will remember."

Guest speaker at the ceremony, Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Mark Brown, WRNMMC's 2014 Senior Sailor of the Year, said the hospital corpsman is the only enlisted corps in the U.S. Navy.

"[We] serve in a variety of billets, providing care to the sick, ill or injured service men and women. We serve at shore establishments as well as in harm's way at sea or downrange. We do this with no regard for our own personal safety. We do this because it has to be done. We have often been called loblolly boy, nurse, bayman, surgeon steward, apothecary, and even doc. There's a certain ease and feel of camaraderie when you know the person next to you will be there no matter what, and has oftentimes been through your worst nightmare and is willing to go through it again just to ease your pain."

Navy Capt. Sarah Martin, WRNMMC chief of staff, called hospital corpsmen "the

backbone of what we do at this facility, the backbone of what happens in the field, and the backbone of what needs to happen in the fleet because you guys keep the rest of the force ready to go and without you they wouldn't be able to do what they need to do. It's an honor to serve with you and thank you for what you do."

In a letter read at the ceremony, Navy Medicine Force Master Chief Sherman Boss also praised hospital corpsmen.

"From our beginnings in 1898 to today's present force of 26,594 active, 4,984 FTS [Full Time Support] and reserve, hospital corpsmen have served in countless battles and operations throughout the globe. Performing courageously on the front lines and within designated medical treatment facilities, I can say without a doubt corpsmen are a formidable naval asset."

Boss called hospital corpsmen "an exceptional group of Sailors, whose dedication to duty and willingness to put others before self is evident not only

through [a] rich history but also through [corpsmen's] present day accomplishments.

"Whether you are providing health care in port, underway, in a hospital, or saving lives on the battlefield, you continue to be a vital part of our Navy and Marine Corps fighting team. What the Hospital Corps has done in the past made a difference and what each of you do today matters. We are charged with one of the Navy's most important missions; caring for our nation's sons and daughters. This cannot happen without you."

Vice Adm. Matthew L. Nathan, the 37th surgeon general of the Navy and chief of the Navy's Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, expressed similar sentiments in his letter, also read at the ceremony.

"President William McKinley signed an act of Congress in 1898 establishing the Hospital Corps. Since the first 25 apothecaries were appointed by the secretary of the Navy, the Hospital Corps has grown immeasurably in size and scope. Today, we honor their

bravery, brilliance and sacrifice while serving in harm's way to protect the lives of our Sailors and Marines. From the Revolutionary War to current overseas operations, corpsmen have served heroically and gallantly.

"It's evident that corpsmen are selflessly dedicated to caring for patients worldwide. Because of their exceptional and comprehensive training, we are experiencing the lowest battle mortality and non-battle injury rates in the history of war," Nathan continued.

He added the Navy Hospital Corps is the largest and most decorated rate in the Navy. Twenty-two corpsmen have received Medals of Honor. Additionally, 20 naval ships have been named in honor of corpsmen worldwide. Since the end of World War I, 178 corpsmen have been awarded the Navy Cross. During the Vietnam War alone, corpsmen were awarded four Medals of Honor, 31 Navy Crosses, 179 Silver Stars, and 292 Bronze Stars for heroism while under fire.

"This recognition is a humbling testament to the quality of character and integrity of the men and women proudly wearing the caduceus and answering to 'doc,'" Nathan stated.

"To the more than 30,000 active duty and reserve corpsmen globally, thank you for your steadfast and fearless service at home and overseas. Happy birthday Hospital Corps," the Navy surgeon general concluded.

The ceremony concluded with hospital corpsmen taking the Hospital Corpsman's Pledge, vowing to "hold the care of the sick and injured to be a privilege and a sacred trust and [assisting] the medical officer with loyalty and honesty."

Three cakes celebrating the occasion were then cut by Willis and Hospitalman Sara Russell, the oldest and youngest hospital corpsmen at the event respectively, along with retired Hospital Corpsman Master Chief Joseph Pelot.

Food, Music Highlight Caribbean-American Heritage Month Celebration

By Bernard S. Little
WRNMMC Public
Affairs staff writer

The spicy aroma of Caribbean foods filled the America Building lobby while spirited steelpan music played as the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center community celebrated Caribbean-American Heritage Month with a program June 17 in the medical center.

Master Chief Sharon M. Tavares, senior enlisted leader of the Directorate for Administration at WRNMMC, served as guest speaker for the celebration.

A native of Jamaica, Tavares said the people of the Caribbean “will always remember the sixth month, of the sixth year of the 21st Century as a momentous occasion.

“On 5 June, 2006, the president of the United States of America, George W. Bush, officially proclaimed June [to be] Caribbean-American Heritage Month,” she said.

Bush’s proclamation came as a result of the U.S. House of Representatives unanimously adopting a resolution (H. Con. Res. 71) in June 2005 sponsored by Congresswoman Barbara Lee, recognizing “the significance of Caribbean people and their descendants in the history and culture of the United States.”

On Feb. 14, 2006, the U.S. Senate passed the resolution. Dr. Claire Nelson, founder and president of the Institute of Caribbean Studies, spearheaded the effort for the recognition of National Caribbean-American Heritage Month.

“For centuries, the United States has benefitted from the contributions of the sons and daughters of the Caribbean,” Tavares said in her presentation at WRNMMC last week. She added Caribbean-American Heritage Month not only celebrates the contribu-



Photo by Bernard S. Little

Percussionist Ronald C. Emrit plays the steelpan during the Caribbean-American Heritage Month celebration at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC) June 17.

tions of those individuals in helping to shape this country, but the recognition also pays tribute to “the bonds of friendship uniting the United States and Caribbean countries,” she said.

“Our nation has strived as a country of immigrants, and we are more vibrant and hopeful because of the talents, faith and values of Caribbean-Americans,” Tavares continued.

As leaders in government, sports, entertainment, arts and other fields, Caribbean-Americans have enriched and strengthened the United States, Tavares said. She cited contributions of Caribbean immigrants and descendants, including U.S. founding father Alexander Hamilton, jazz and classical pianist and singer Hazel Scott, actor and Ambassador Sir Sidney Poitier, former U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder, former Secretary of State and Army

Gen. Colin Powell, actor Kelsey Grammer, writer and editor Susan Taylor, actor Harry Belafonte, actress Cicely Tyson, singer/actress Rihanna, and the late congresswoman, the Hon. Shirley Chisholm, among others.

Tavares also noted the leading role the U.S. military has played in integration and diversity.

“Approximately 65,000 immigrants are currently serving in the armed forces, with the Navy having the highest number of foreign-born personnel. Latin America and the Caribbean have accounted for the largest percentage of this group since July 2002,” Tavares added.

The master chief explained that diversity of personal experiences, perspectives and visions within the ranks of the U.S. military, “allow for creative thinking, and help strive toward innovation and ingenuity.”

“This is definitely



Photo by Bernard S. Little

Members of the Multi-Cultural Committee at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC) serve foods with Caribbean influence to staff and visitors at WRNMMC during the Caribbean-American Heritage Month celebration at WRNMMC hosted by the committee June 17.

a time of celebration for the people of the Caribbean, and in so doing, let us not forget the potential for greater benefits from such an observance,” Tavares concluded.

Percussionist Ronald C. Emrit played a variety of songs on the steelpan at the celebration.

Born in Trinidad, Emrit explained the steelpan, or steel drum, was invented there during the 1940s. “There’s a great marriage between the American military and [the instrument],” he said. He added that during World War II, there was a U.S. Navy base in Trinidad at Chaguaramas. From the discarded 55-gallon oil

barrels from the base, the locals made the steelpans because the larger areas of the barrels enabled pan players to produce more notes, he explained.

Since 2006, the White House has issued an annual proclamation recognizing June as Caribbean-American Heritage Month. In his proclamation for this year’s observance, President Barack Obama stated, “For centuries, Americans have been united with our Caribbean neighbors not just by friendship and economic cooperation, but also by our common values and ties of kin. From a region of extraordinary beauty, generations of immi-

grants have brought their enormous spirit, unique talents, and vibrant culture to the United States. Their contributions have enriched our nation and strengthened the deep bonds between our peoples.

“As partners, our nations have reached for progress together, and in our diverse cultures and complex histories, we see a common trajectory toward a more free, equal, and prosperous community,” the president added.

The WRNMMC Multi-Cultural Committee sponsored the event, one of many they host at the medical center to raise and enrich cultural awareness on the base.

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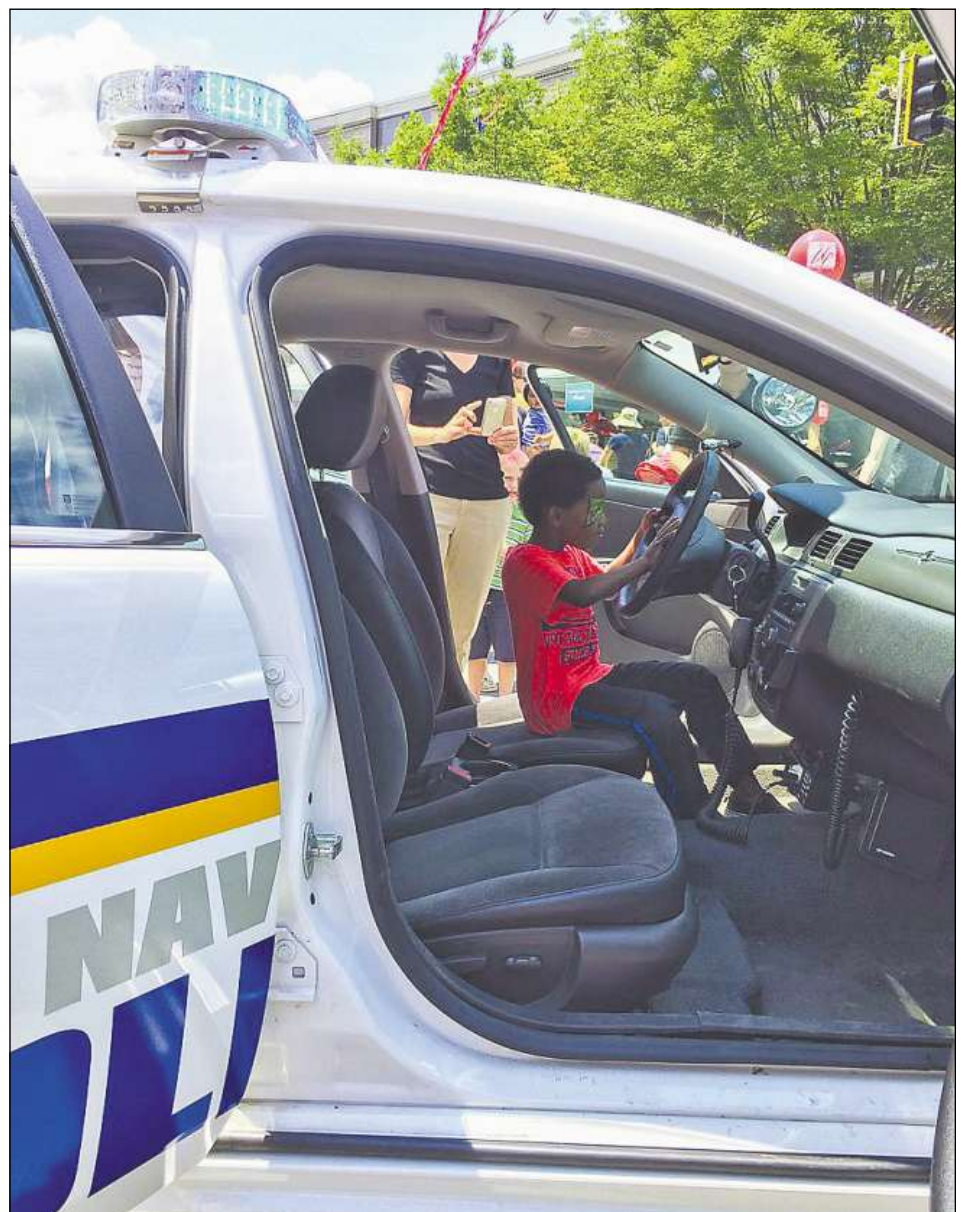
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NSAB Police Display Proves Popular at 'Imagination Bethesda' Event



Photos by Ronald Inman

Naval Support Activity Bethesda's (NSAB) Police Department participated in the City of Bethesda's 'Imagination Bethesda,' a children's street festival celebrating the arts, June 6. Department personnel welcomed hundreds of kids and their families to sit in a patrol unit, try out the siren and lights, take pictures, and provided NSAB Police Department souvenirs. The patrol unit turned out to be one of the most popular attractions at the festival.



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